TRIAL and CONDEMNATION OF THE Two False Witnesses Unto the late MIDNIGHT-CRY.

Published by

Mr MASON.

The *Author* of that present Great *Assembly* in *Buckinghamshire*; who are met together under a Deluding Expectation of *Christ's Coming to Judgment* on *Whitsunday* approaching.

SHEWING

Of what dangerous Consequence this may prove to the present Government, if they should persist in the same Enthusiastick notion next *Whitsuntide* come Twelvemonth, &c. under pretence of a literal Mistake, &c.

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LONDON:

The Tryal and Condemnation of the

TWO WITNESSES

UNTO THE

Late Midnight-Cry.

WE have credible Information (from ſeveral Hands) that this Mr. *Maſon* (a *Miniſter* of the *Church of England* in *Water-ſtratford*, in *Buckinghamſhire*) is a Perſon of a Pious Life and Converſation, who above Three Years ago writ his *Midnight-Cry*; which, being a ſerious and practical *Sermon*, tending to ſtir up our exceeding vicious and debauched Age to a ſtartling Conſideration of the near Approach of Chriſt to Judgment (the great Argument uſed both by our Saviour and the Primitive Church in thoſe early Days of the Goſpel, unto conſtant Watchfulneſs, *&c.*) was a grateful Subject unto all the godly amongſt us; and though there appeared (to ſeveral at leaſt) nothing extraordinary in that Diſcourſe, more than to quicken up all ſorts to an earneſt Expectation of, and Preparation unto Chriſt's ſpeedy Approach to Judgment, (Mr *Maſon*'s Modeſty not prefixing any limited Time, *&c.*) yet it became of ſuch Univerſal Acceptation with the more pious ſort [who under this late Great *Revolution* throughout the Chriſtian World, and (more eſpecially in theſe Kingdoms) have been waiting for ſome extraordinary Things immediately *Antecedent* thereunto] that *the Book* ſoon *ſpread*, and not altogether ſo much from the *Title* thereof (which was ſingular and ſtartling) as from the *Curioſity* of many, who expected to find ſome *prefixed Time*, or ſuch ſingular *Prognoſticks* thereof

might be *Equivalent* thereunto. But being fruſtrated herein, the loud *Rumor* thereof was buried for a Time.

But ſoon after, the great *Enemy of Souls* began to lead the Apoſtate Age (which like the Rebellious Unbelieving Jews of old was greedily looking after a *Sign*) into his dark Labyrinth of Error and Confuſion, and converting himſelf into an *Angel of Light*, raiſed up *Two* bold-fac'd *Men*, who called themſelves, The Two Prophets unto the Midnight Cry, (*Ward* and *Evans*) who with much admir'd Arrogancy and Preſumption, laboured hard to ingraff a fixed Perſwaſion into us, That *They were immediately called by God to bear witneſs to the Truth of the* Revelations: And that *They were the* Two Witneſſes (in *Apoc.* 11.) who were to be *ſlain*, &c.——Alſo, That *God* had paſſed an *Irrevocable Decree* againſt *England*, for *moſt immediate Deſtruction*, more *Infallible* than that *Sacred Oath* which he ſware againſt *the Jews*, That *they ſhould not enter into his Reſt*. Making this dangerous *Impulſe* of their *deluded Fancy*, equal with the great *Articles of our Faith*, that are *Eſſential unto Salvation*, and of the ſame *Divine Signature* as is that *Teſtimony* or *Witneſs of the Holy Ghoſt* in true Believers: The chief Subject of the enſuing *Diſcourſe* being to *detect* this *Spirit of Deluſion*, and to bring it to a fair *Tryal* by the *Touchſtone* of *Scripture-Truth*, and to condemn theſe Arrogant Preſumptuous *Impoſtors* by the Harmony of the *Word of God*, throughout the *Old* and *New Teſtament*.

This hath been written Two Years ſince, and was preſented to his Grace the Archbiſhop of *Canterbury*, and to ſome other of the *Reverend Biſhops* and *Clergy*, &c. and had then come forth into the Publick, if *They* had thought That had been the fitteſt Seaſon, and in whoſe Wiſdom the *Author* did confide. Since that Time the Infinite Goodneſs of Divine Providence hath wonderfully preſerved theſe Nations from that *Immediate Deſtruction* (now Three Years) which theſe *Two falſe Witneſſes* did then ſo preſumptuouſly pretend to foretel (as if by *Divine Revelation*) was then *inſtantly and inevitably* to befal us, and which they affirmed with ſuch amazing Confidence, as if *They* had been in the *Secret Council of the Almighty*.

Theſe *Two*, (who thought themſelves little inferior to the *Two Anointed Ones that ſtood before the Lord of the whole Earth*) being thus ſhamefully confounded and put to ſilence, by the *Event* of things (which is the ſureſt *Interpreter* of *Viſions* and *Revelations*) the *ſatanical Spirit of Deluſion* takes an other occaſion to vent it ſelf; and now laying aſide *Ward* and *Evans*, transforms it ſelf (in a more ſubtile manner than before) *viz.* through a *Dream* (or Delivery *Viſion*) in the Brain of Mr. *Maſon* (the *Author* of that *Midnight-Cry*:) Herein imitating thoſe

those Sacred *Dreams* and *Visions* of the *Patriarchs* and *Prophets*. Now by what *Fantasms* resembling these Sacred and Oracular Visions, even some good Men have been Acted, in our late days, is too long here to particularize; it might be wished there had not been so many Instances thereof. That Impulse of Mr. *Sedgwick*, (called *Doomsday Sedgwick*) is yet too fresh in Memory to be wholly forgotten, and is revived on this unhappy occasion now before us.

It had been greatly to have been desir'd, that this Mr. *Mason* had read a most Elaborate *Manuscript*, (now fitting for the Press) wherein all the *Numbers* of Daniel and the Revelations are made to *Accord in one and the same* Years for the Accomplishment of *All these great Changes*, that are expected coming on the Christian World, (and particularly the Time for Christs Second Coming, and also for the End of the World (which Mr. *Mason* hath so well observed, are *Two distinct Times*, in his *Midnight-Cry*) And whereon the whole is *Illustrated* by the Joynt Consent of all the *Prophets* (in the Old and New Testament) and all other parts of *Sacred History*; as also by the great *Works* and *Wonders* of God, from the Creation to this present Time In their *Historical*, *Chronological*, *Mystical* and *Typical* Significations, in several Thousand famous Instances. A Work of that great *Rarity* and *Accurateness*, that it hath been perused by some of the most Learned *Divines*, (and Persons of *Honour* and *Quality*) in *Foreign Parts*, as well as by several eminent Divines both of the Church of *England* (and others) with extream satisfaction, and particular *Recommendation* unto the World, which ample *Testimonies*, &c. will be prefixed, which when it comes forth in publick, may soon remove that dark *Veil* that now is so much spread on all our Faces, (to say no more.)

In the mean time if the *Reader* please to afford a deliberate Examination, of the many remarkable things presented to his serious consideration in the following Treatise, he may soon perceive on what *Sandy Foundation* these *Two false Witnesses* build their *Predictions*, &c. and consequently may the better judge, Whether these self-conceited and (audaciously) confident Men, are like to be the *Supporters* of the Divine Oracles of God, or the *Harbingers* of that Great *Midnight Cry*, which is immediately to precede the *Second coming of our Saviour*, whatever Impressions Mr. *Masons Dreams or Visions* have made on that poor deluded Multitude, (who will find their expectations frustrated in few days, to their real shame and confusion of Face. For how can *They* who proceed so directly opposite unto the whole Sense and Tenour of *Scripture Threatnings*, in all the most severe and positive

positive *Comminations* against the greatest Sinners, (which always intend a *Condition* or purpose of *Revocation* upon *Repentance*, and are denounced for that great *End*, and not to drive Men or Nations, (as *Ward* and *Evans* have done) into the Gulph of *Desperation*, &c. I say, how is it likely these Ignorant and Presumptuous false *Prophets* can be sent of God? And whether these *Brain-sick Impostors*, who have thus strangely Transformed the Infinite *Patience* and *Goodness* of God into false *Notions*, *Dreams* or *Impulses* of their own head (and which Three Years experience have abundantly demonstrated to be *false* and also *dangerous*, even to the present *Government*, by strengthning the hands of our common *Enemy*, who watcheth for all such *Occasions*, and weakning the minds of many, who otherwise would strenuously and unanimously oppose that *Inundation*, threatning all our ruine, whether these Men are likely to be the Two *Silver Trumpets* for Proclaiming the Great *Jubilee*, or the *Second Coming* of our Blessed *Saviour* unto *Judgment* [beginning his Glorious Kingdom here on Earth, if St. *Paul* had the right apprehensions of that Time, 2 *Tim.* 4. 1.] And believe it, the great *Midnight-Cry*, Mat. 24. will be of another *Nature* and *Effect*, (both on the *True Church* of Christ, and the *Apostate State of Christianity*,) those *Wise* and *Foolish Virgins*, who both, awoke, arose, and *Trimm'd their Lamps* at this *Alarm*.

Having given this necessary *Precaution* to undeceive the deluded Multitude, who are met together in a great *Assembly* in *Buckingham-shire*, expecting *The Appearance of Christ to Judgment on Witsunday* now immediately approaching, according to Mr. *Masons* limited Time, (in his *Dream* or *Vision*) which being to expire so speedily (as a Week or a Fortnights time,) will be soon confuted; and therefore needs no other Arguments thereunto, but the short Event: We shall therefore leave that *Fraternity* to their honest meaning Mr. *Mason's* Apprehensions, (which is like to prove no other than the Embraces of *Juno* in a *Cloud*, &c.) and cast a more stedfast Eye on the aforesaid *Ward* and *Evans*, those Two deceived *Witnesses*, &c.) that so we may rightly inform our selves of what Complexion they are, and of what deep and hastly Lineaments their (*Proteus-like*) Countenance is Composed, who (to speak the Truth in one Word) do seem to cast something like a Contempt on the *Articles* of the *Christian Faith*, and also on the *Spirits infallible Testimony*, and on the *Sacred Symbols* of Christianity, (or those *Seals* of the *Covenant of Grace*,) by making their *Whimsical Impulses* equal thereunto, if not preferring them before the same.

That which follows on this Subject, is Written in a *Letter* to a Friend,

Friend, Proving, That the moſt Tremendous and moſt Poſitiv
Judgments of God in Scripture denounced againſt *Perſons*, *Cities* o
Nations, do not lay them under an abſolute *Neceſſity* of continuin
Impenitent, or of *Periſhing* under the ſame Doom; exceeding uſeful, bot
for Sinners of the greateſt Obduracy, as well as for ſuch who ar
Wounded under the ſenſe of their Guilt, and tempted to *Deſpai*
who may here clearly behold the *Nature* of Gods moſt Simple and In
fallible Decree, touching the *Damnation* of every *Self-reprobating* Sin
ner, and how it becomes the *Antecedent* unto, but not the *Phyſica*
Cauſe of their *Damnation*; which *Deſtruction* is therefore poſſible to b
Prevented, (taken in a *Simple* and *Phyſical* ſenſe and conſideration,) b
Man, as a *Rational* and *free Agent*, (whoſe *Will* was never *forced* o
Preneceſſitated to do *Evil*, meerly from Gods *Decree*, as the *Effect* the
follows its *Cauſe*,) although this *Decree* [grounded on his foreſigh
of Mans *Self-Reprobation*, as alſo his *Decree* for peculiar *Election*, whic
is grounded on no Good in Man foreſeen] admits of no *Fruſtratio*
Theſe weighty Matters, (with ſome other conſiderations of gre
Moment,) are (on this occaſion) here briefly and clearly handled
even to the apprehenſion of the meaneſt Capacities, and the Judgmen
of all ſuch, whoſe *Education-Light*, or *Intereſt*, or *Partial* and blin
Reſpect of Perſons, hath not caſt a *Miſt* on their Underſtandings; an
the *Arguments* are Solid and *Orthodox*, agreeable to the *Doctrin*
the *Church of England*, and the Conſent of the Univerſality of *D*
vines beyond the Seas; and above all, to the whole *Tenour* of t
Scripture throughout all its parts.

A LETTER to a FRIEND

On the Occasion of

Mr. *MASONS*'s Midnight-Cry,

AND

Those Two false Prophets *who most boldly Presumed to* Comment *thereupon from their* Whimsies *and* Impulses, *being the* Forerunner *of, and* Preparative *unto the said Mr.* Masons *late* Deluding Vision *which hath gathered such a great Concourse of People in* Buckingham-shire, *to the disturbance of the World.*

Sir,

SEeing you have been pleased to ask my Opinion of that Book, lately published by *T. W.* and *V. E.* who call themselves *the Two Witnesses to the Midnight-Cry*, it's one small part of the Duty and Honour I owe you, to Comply with this Request, though I ave at present something on my hands, which hinders me from gi-ing such an ample Answer, as otherwise I might.

I was in expectation to find some extraordinary thing in that *Midnight-Cry*, not knowing at first sight but this might be that Cry retold in *Matth.* 25. 6. which all agree is to be the *Prodromus* of Christs

Christ's Second Coming immediately to ensue thereon, upon which *Alarum* the Text expresly tells us, 1st. *That the Wise and foolish Virgins* (who were both asleep) *Awoke*. 2d. Both these Virgins *Trimmed their Lamps*. 3d. *The Foolish go to the Wise for Oyl*, to furnish their Extinguished Lamps. 4th. Being repulsed, *they go to buy Oyl* where it was to be sold, and while they went to buy, *The Bridegroom came*. When I see such a grand effect, (or something like it) throughout the *Christian World*, (made up of *Wise and Foolish Virgins*,) and that it receives its Life and Influence from this late *Midnight Cry*; I shall be Induced to consider, (if not to conclude) that this *Alarum* is likely to be *That* of which our Saviour spoke. (in the Text before.) In the mean time the Author thereof, doubtless, had very Pious Ends in Publishing a Warning to us all, so useful and seasonable at all times.

That the Sins of *England*, (and particularly of this City) are very great, beyond all others in the World besides, if we consider the heinous Aggravations we lye under, with respect of that clear Sunshine of *Gospel-Light* which we enjoy, and the many wonderful *Mercies* and *Deliverances* God hath wrought out for us, beyond what he hath done for others, and the many *Warnings* we have had by several great Judgments, (both of *Plague*, *Fire*, *Earth-quakes*, *War*, &c.) and our great Incorrigible Frame, growing rather worse and worse under All, and therefore that we may have great cause to fear and expect some extraordinary *Desolating Judgments*, unless we Repent, (by deep Humiliation and Amendment) is that wherein all sober Persons are unanimously agreed (and God Almighty grant us all a true Repentance.) We have also no reason to presume we shall escape better than other People and Nations, whom God hath destroyed for less provocations than are found among us, unless we throughly amend our ways. But yet, *How long* God is resolved to lengthen out his *Patience* and *Long-suffering* to a very provoking People, concerning whom God hath positively and expresly declared the *Limited Periods* of his Mercy in his Holy Word, (and especially when we read in Scriptures, how prevalent the Cries and Prayers of one or other of his peculiar Favourites have been, in turning away his Wrath from a City or Nation) is a Secret amongst his *Arcana Imperii*, into which no Person, no not the Holy *Prophets* and *Apostles*, to whom God did so immediately Reveal himself) ought to prie. Nor will any truly humble and conscientious Person dare presume to affirm; and least of all to Determine, (as our Two Prophets undertake to do) with such Confidence and Infallibility, as if they had *sate in Council with the*

 Almighty,

Almighty, and that *the Secret of VVisdom and Understanding* had been locked up within their Breast: And yet if they were *Divinely assured* that God had revealed a *prefixed Period* for his *Judgment*; nay, though he had confirmed it with a Sacred *Oath*, and that it seemed never so *Positive* or *Irrevocable*, yet the whole Tenor of Scripture, (as by and by we shall observe in several great Instances) in all its Prophetick parts agrees herein, *viz.* That God reserves a *Secret or tacit Condition*, and (either Implicitly or Explicitly) resolving, notwithstanding, to shew Mercy, and not to destroy in case of Repentance, let their Doom be never so great, and the Period never so plainly express'd, and this also even when Destruction is Threatned immediately to attend (even as at the Door.)

Is any *Angel*, (much less any Man) Infallibly assur'd, but that God may have said of *England*, as he did of Old unto sinful *Judah* and *Jerusalem*, for whom the Prophet wrestled, although they were at that time a greater provocation than all others, *Jer.* 14. 7, 8, 9. *O Lord, though our Iniquity testifie against us, do thou it for thy Names sake; although our Back-bitings are many, and we have sinned against thee. O the hope of* Israel, *and the Saviour in the time of trouble, VVhy shouldst thou be as a Stranger in the Land, As a Man that cannot save? Yet thou O Lord art in the midst of us, and we are called by thy Name, leave us not.* The Prophet better understood Gods Will, and had a nearer access to his Heart, and was more acquainted with his Secret than *T. VV.* and *V. E.* (our two late Prophets) can pretend to be. A Blessed Prophet whereof we have in that famous Text, *Isa.* 48. 1, 2, &c. *Hear ye this, O House of* Jacob, *which art called by the Name of* Israel, *who swear by the Name of the Lord, and mention the God of* Israel, *but not in Truth and Righteousness: For they call themselves of the Holy City, and Stay themselves on the God of* Israel. *I knew that thou art obstinate, and thy Neck an Iron Sinew, and thy Brow Brass*, &c. *yet thou heardest not, yea thou knowest not, yea from that time that thy Ear was not opened; for I know thou wouldest deal very treacherously, and wast called a Transgressor from the VVomb. Yet for my Names sake will I defer my anger, and for my Praise will I refrain that I cut thee not off for my own, even for my own sake, will I do it, for how should my Name be polluted? and I will not give my Glory to another.* Which is an excellent Coment on that Famous Text in *Deut.* 32. 26. Where we may see by what wonderful *Argument* God is pleased to perswade himself from a total Rejection of this his Sinful and Rebellious People, who had been a continual provocation to him, from the day they came out of *Egypt* all along in *the VVilderness for Forty Years. I said I would scatter them into Corners, I would make*

their

their remembrance to ceaſe from among Men,——v. 27. *Were it not that I feared the wrath of the Enemy, leſt their Adverſaries ſhould behave themſelves ſtrangely, and leſt they ſhould ſay, Our Hand is high, and the Lord hath not done* All This.——v. 28. *Though they are a Nation void of Counſel, neither is there any underſtanding in them.* And *Moſes*, in his Interceſſion, uſeth the ſame Argument with God, *Exod.* 32. 12. compared with *Numb.* 14. 13, 14, 15.

Who can tell but God may have ſpoken thus to England alſo? But *T. W.* hath publiſhed to the World, as a Perſon of extraordinary Call by God [and by and by we may diſcover he takes himſelf and his Brother *V. E.* to be thoſe *Two Witneſſes in the* Revelations, *c.* 11.] ſent to denounce unto us, That *there is a dreadful Judgment immediately coming on the Land*, and that *the honour of* God *and of his Juſtice, and of his* Goodneſs *to them and their Poſterity obligeth him* (ſome would do well to perſwade him thus plainly to expreſs himſelf, if he knows his own meaning) *to begin and make an end of them at once*, (pag. 8) And in the ſame *Page* he pretends to tell us what kind of *Judgment* this will be, which he would perſwade us he is moſt infallibly certain [as of any one Article in his Creed] will immediately overtake us (*his* Mercy *engageth him to ſend forth his Army, and deſtroy them.*) And he often repeats it, that we may not miſtake him in ſuch a matter of importance, *viz.* That this Belief of his, That God's Decree is irrevocably gone out to deſtroy us immediately, without any limited Conditions of our Repentance, is the *Great Point or Article of his Faith*, (as pag. 11.) [*though my Faith in a Judgment immediately coming upon us, be the principal thing I am enlightned in*, &c.] And pag. 11. (*I am in the Faith of it ſtill.*) And again (in the ſame Page) [*If I ſhould grant this a Deluſion, O how would it break my Faith all in Pieces? And therefore there is a neceſſity laid upon me to maintain that it is from* God, *becauſe I ſhould overthrow my* Religion *if I did not.*] I wiſh he knew what his *Religion* is, if he can tell us. Again (in his Poſtſcript) [*And therefore I dare not ſo much as admit of an* If:] As much as if he had ſaid, God hath determined that all our *Repentance* ſhall not prevent his *Infallible Decree* that is gone out. And in pag. 12. he proceeds [*I cannot tell how any can make out that this Faith is a Deluſion, but he muſt reflect upon That*——Speaking in the Words before of David's *Teſtimony of the Spirit*, touching his own Salvation; thus equalling his *Impreſſion* or *Impulſe* with the *Sacred Seal or Witneſs of the Spirit.* And if we track him a little further (in the ſame twelfth Page) he is reſolved to die a Martyr for this *Fundamental Point* or *Article* of his *Religion* [*Now you ſee it is come to this*

Iſſue, that I am to maintain this Faith *even unto the Death.*] But the beſt of all is in p. 14. [*This is to be ſeen only by an Eye of* Faith] A little before he ſpake of Armies of God's ſending [which we ſuppoſe he did not mean of *Locuſts* (except the French Locuſts) nor yet of ſwarms of *Flies*, &c.] and though his natural Eye-ſight could not look croſs the Seas into *France*, yet it is difficult to perſwade us that he had not heard what great Preparations *Lewis le Grande* had made by Sea and Land for giving us a Viſit to deſtroy the *Northern Hereſy* (ſo called) *cum multis aliis*; and then his Faith is but a *moral Perſwaſion* and no Divine *Revelation*. Now if he hath never heard of theſe things, we may ſafely conjecture he hath ſlept for ſome Years, like *Epimenides*, (and might alſo fall into a Dream) But if he hath heard thereof, and believes the ſame, then his Faith is no more Divine than that of every *Philonides* (as to theſe things;) and if there is a *Peculiarity* in his *Faith* (as he will needs have it to be) we find no foundation for it it in all the Scripture [*viz.* That *England hath out-ſinned her Day of Grace, and that all our moſt hearty Endeavours to Repent and Turn to God will not prevent the Infallible Certainty of our immediate Deſtruction:* Or indeed that *any Nation or People though never ſo wicked, did ever lie under ſuch a Doom:*] And though Chriſt's Words unto *Jeruſalem* [*O that thou hadſt known in this thy Day the things that belonged to thy Peace, but now they are hid from thy Eyes*] ſeems to come neareſt hereunto, yet we are to note, 1. That Expreſſion had not a direct tendency to the Salvation of their Souls, as if thereby they had been laid under an utter Impoſſibility of Repenting, for the Words are an Appendant to that Expreſſion before [*How often would I have gathered you together as a Hen her Chickens under her Wing*] which ſome eminent Divines (together with Mr. *Baxter* alſo) underſtand of our Saviour's intentions of *gathering them into a National Church, under the Goſpel Adminiſtration, and under a moſt peculiar Protection*, as of old they had been in the *Legal Adminiſtration*.] 2. Chriſt exhorts them afterwards as a *collective Body*, to Repent and turn to God (*Daughters of Jeſus weep for your Sins*, &c.) 3. And he prays for them (as a *Nation* conſidered) who were guilty of his Death, in the whole Body Politick, [*viz.* in the *Chief Prieſts and Elders*, or *ruling Sanedrim*, and in its *Members* alſo, when *all the People cryed* out unanimouſly, *Crucify, crucify him*,] and yet he prays *Father forgive them* (*i. e.*) if they will afterwards repent by the preaching of the Goſpel. 4. Chriſt ſent his *Apoſtles* and Miniſters to preach *Repentance* to the whole Nation (elſe why did they enter into the *Jews Synagogues*, from time to time, on their Sabbath Day) Forty Years after his Death, before their City was deſtroyed, and about

Sixty Years to the Remnant afterwards, before they were totally destroyed from being a Nation.

But Mr. *W.* will needs have this Faith and Belief of his (thus riveted into his Head by ſtrong impulſe) to be the *Standard* or *Touchſtone* not only of his own *Faith* and *Chriſtianity*, but for his Apprehenſions of *others Chriſtianity* alſo; (pag. 15.) [*They ſeem all of them to have a Principle of Grace in them who have this* Faith *though they may not have great Parts*:] And that their *Faith* ſhould not prove a *Cheak-Pear* to any of us, they *interlard* their *Divinity* with a ſeeming regard unto *the Scripture* (in the ſame 15th page) [*And they all ſeem to have ſome Impreſſion made upon their Heart from Scripture.*] One great Argument for the Authority of the Word of God is, That all *Hereticks* and *Sectaries* will allow thereof, and fetch their Proofs even from Sacred Writ, though it is evident that the *Church of Rome* (and ſome of her Children who hang on her Skirts, though in Diſguiſe to captivate ſilly Souls) uſe the *Holy Bible* as the *Philiſtines* did the *Ark*, who being perplext (and ſometimes ſmitten in their Conſciences) thereby, hoiſe it up, as decently as they can on their Wooden-Cart [*Tradition*, &c.] and drive it out of their Coaſts, ſending it away from them (to take its Lot) with the deteſtable Offerings of their *Golden Mice*.

In the laſt-mentioned Page Mr. *Th. Ward* gives us a Copy of his Countenance, which looks (*Janus*-like) with a double Face. *Modeſt* on one ſide, and *preſumptuouſly Arrogant* on the other. In the firſt, he tells us, that he, and thoſe of his Way, are not Learned Doctors, as to the *Revelation Propheſies*; But on the other ſide, his *Countenance* looks with ſuch an *Aſpect*, as if he expected the World ſhould take him and his Brother Evans for thoſe Two *Witneſſes* (*Apoc.* 2.) and therefore prepares us all to behold them, as ſhortly to be *Slain*, and to *Riſe* again (in Three Days) and to *Aſcend* up into Heaven, *&c.* As by their own Words; [*And though we cannot fathom thoſe Depths in the* Revelations, *as being indeed uncapable of them, I mean as ordinary People, yet ſuch is the goodneſs of God to condeſcend to do it, in a way we are moſt capable of, and can beſt defend our ſelves,*] ſo that we are now loudly called on to believe the *Revelations* are fulfilling in *Them*, and have prepared us to entertain venerable Thoughts of themſelves though they cannot tell us how we are to underſtand theſe Myſteries. And leſt we too cloſely intrude, M. *Ward* defends himſelf (as with a Quarter-Staff) and lays about him with big Words, to maul down all our Arguments and Objections, which we have in his *Poſtſcript* telling us that *this Faith* (or Doctrine of his Chriſtianity) *is* Infallible and

and hath No If *in it*, (or can admit no poſſibility of Fruſtration;) ſo that hereby he ſeems (in Capital Letters) to tell the World, that this ſacred Creed of his (touching *England's Immediate and Irrevocable Deſtruction*) is built upon a more firm Foundation than that Great Oath of God, which the Apoſtle comments on, in *Heb.* 3. 2. [ὡς ὤμοσα ἐν τῇ ὀργῇ μου, Εἰ, ἐισελεύσονται &c.] who ſware that his Backſliding Church ſhould not enter into his Reſt (or the promiſed Land) yet not in that Simple or Abſolute manner, but that he reſerved a Condition for its non-accompliſhment [namely If they Repented not, ἐαν, &c.]

Another Fencing-Blow Mr. *Ward* gives us (in the ſame *Poſtſcript*) as if he meant to affright us into his Belief [*He that oppoſeth it, viz.* the aforeſaid Article of his Faith) *oppoſeth the* Seal *of* God; *and ſince God hath ſealed it, it is done*] When he ſhall pleaſe to come forth next, he would do well to explain his Meaning, and whether he apprehends *this Anſwer*, is *the Sin againſt the Holy Ghoſt*.

Valentine Evans (his fellow *Witneſs*) comes after, and tells us, he *is ſure none will ever have a Warrant from God to ſpeak or write againſt theſe things*. And takes upon him very proudly and arrogantly to determine that *Satan hath transformed himſelf into an Angel of Light, in Mr.* Baxter's *appearing againſt them, with a pretence to vindicate the Truth* (*Ex Ungue Leonem*, &c.) Surely it becomes theſe extraordinary Prophets (as they would have us take them to be) to ſhew themſelves to be *Men of God* by *Meekneſs* and *Gentleneſs*, even to thoſe who *oppoſe them*, and in modeſty to mention ſo great a Subject as the *Immediate and irreconcilable Deſtruction of a Kingdom*, for which God hath but very lately manifeſted his miraculous Goodneſs and Power, and his infinite patience and long-ſuffering, convincing the moſt indocible, that he is even yet exceeding unwilling to give us up a Victim to the Fury of the Adverſary, and a Prey unto their devouring Teeth. How ought this Conſideration to check (if not to eradicate) the moſt bold preſumptuous Confidence, and ſelf-Opinion of our Two new-raiſed Prophets, who if they knew what a *godly Jealouſie* meant, would fear, leſt they be left by God to the Judgment of ſpiritual Pride, leſt the *Devil hath transformed himſelf in them*, acting by the deluſory Impreſſions and Impulſes of their own Imagination, and tempting them in this manner unto ſuch dangerous and almoſt unparallel Preſumption as they ſeem guilty of in ſober and underſtanding Perſons thoughts; and how greatly doth it become them to lie proſtrate in Duſt and Aſhes, leſt God in his Judicial Anger ſmite them dead, for daring (in ſuch a confident manner) to enter

into

into the Secret of his Decree? and with the *Bethshamites* to look into the Ark? (1 *Sam.* 6. 19.)

Their Delusion may evidently appear to any who will please to weigh the following Considerations.

CONSIDERATION I.

Touching God's Predeterminate Will, (Decree or Purpose) concerning Judgment on any Person, City, or Nation, although it be threatned most positively and expresly in Scripture, yet they always carry with them a secret or tacit Condition or Limitation, and are never to be understood as Irrevocable.

MANY famous Instances hereof we have in SCRIPTURE.

I. God seemed most positive, that he would *drown the old World*, repeating his purpose many times, without once expressing his Resolution, to spare them if they repented (at least that we read of) but plainly threatning to wait no longer than One hundred and twenty Years (*Gen.* 6. 7, 15, 17. compared with ch. 7. 4.) and at the end of that period then to destroy them: Yet this had a secret Condition in it, with a Resolution to have spared them upon Repentance, and God's Patience and long-Suffering towards them in bearing and forbearing so long, had a direct tendency unto this great *End*, 1 *Pet.* 3. 20. compared with *Rom.* 2. 4.

2. God seems most positive for *Pharaoh's Destruction*; and several Texts plainly tell us, *God hardned him* [*Exod.* 4. 21. 7. 3, 13, 14. 9. 12, 15, 16.] And S. *Paul* sets him forth as a famous Figure of that which we call *Reprobation*, Rom. 9. 17, *&c.*] Not that God is *Active* in hardning any Sinner, or in tempting any unto Evil (as *Jam.* 1. 13.) but only is pleased to deny to some his *sanctifying Grace*, for their abuse

abuſe of the *Strivings of the Spirit* in his *common Grace* (or in a Word, for ſinning unto high degrees againſt the Light and Conviction of their Illuminating Conſcience.) And becauſe this moſt juſt denyal, is the *Antecedent* of that *Infallible Conſequent*, (viz. Hardneſs of Heart, and Impenitency) and bears ſuch an *Analogical* reſemblance of the *Cauſe* and it's *Effect*, therefore the Scripture ſo frequently expreſſeth it, as if God was *Active* in it, as the ſimple or *Phyſical Cauſe* of hardning wicked Men, which in reality is no other than his leaving thoſe ſelf-hardning Sinners, (who reſolve to perſiſt in Sin without fear and trembling, againſt the checks and wounds of their Enlightned Conſcience) unto the Luſts and Corruptions of their own Hearts, which without his Sanctifying Grace, will aſſuredly ariſe daily unto greater and ſtronger Rebellions, and end in final Obduracy, Unbelief and Impenitency. *Pharaoh* was left by God to the liberty and freedom of his own Will, [for who queſtions, but he had the power to let *Iſrael* go,] (as appears plainly from *Exod.* 3. 19. *Chap.* 9. 30, 34.) but he firſt *hardens his own Heart* againſt God, before God in his Juſt Judgment left him to himſelf, [as *Ex.* 5. 3. 8. 15, 32. 9. 30, 34. And the (Heathen) *Philiſtines* had learnt ſo much Divinity, that the grand *Cauſe of* Pharaohs *Deſtruction* was to be layd at *his own Door*, and not at *Gods*, in that Famous Text of 1 *Sam.* 6. 6. God really deſir'd *Pharaoh* ſhould Obey him, and had rather he ſhould have Turned and Lived for ever in his Favour, then to have periſhed in his Sin, (if we dare credit the Scripture, and take it in its own expreſs words, without Mens Gloſſes and Coments) *Exod.* 4. 5, 8, 9. 6. 13, 29. 7. 1, 2, 8. 10. 9. 20. And *Chap.* 10. 3. puts it yet more clearly out of doubt, [*How long wilt thou yet refuſe to humble thy ſelf before me?*] And to make it yet more evident, we are to conſider that the *Firſt Threatning* God ſent him was, *The Death of the Firſt-born throughout* Ægypt, and this Judgment was the ſame, that after all made him bow by force, [*Exod.* 4. 23. compared with *Ch.* 11. 1, 4, 5.] Thus Gods Patience and Long-ſuffering waited on this ſelf-deſtroyer, to bring him unto Repentance and Salvation, as 2 *Pet.* 3 9. And thus it waiteth at this day on the great Enemies or Oppreſſors of his Church.

3. What more poſitive than the *Deſtruction of the* Canaanites, ſeveral times Sentenced to be all cut off, (*Exod.* 23. 24. *Deut.* 7. 2, 16, 20.) and if any of them remained, it's expreſly forbid, *to make any Covenant with them.* (*Exod.* 23. 32, 34. 12. 15. *Deut.* 7. 2.) and yet repenting *Rahab* is preſerved, and the crafty *Gibeonites* famous *League with* Joſuah was ſuch a Heavenly Myſtery, that the *Sun* and *Moon* was made

made to *ſtand ſtill* a whole Day, while *Joſuah* fought for their defence, (*Joſh.* 9. 15 compared with *Ch.* 10. 12, 13, 14.) whereby all the World were invited to take Cogniſance thereof.

4. What more plainly foretold and threatned than *the Deſtruction of the Jews*? Deut. 29. 28, 29. and of *Jeruſalem* by the *Babylonians*, Ezech. 21. 7. 2 Kings 20. 17, 18. *Ch.* 23. 26, 27. The laſt Text telling us this ſhould come to paſs for the Sins of *Manaſſe*; Nor did *Hezekiah* and *Joſia*, (the two moſt Pious Kings of *Judah*) prevail to alter Gods reſolution herein, notwithſtanding their great zeal in Reformation. And yet for all this, if *Zedekiah* had gone forth to meet *the King of* Babylons *Princes*, then he ſhould have lived, and *Jeruſalem* had not been burnt, notwithſtanding all the Predictions of the Prophets from God himſelf, threatning the ſame, as by an Irrevocable Decree. *Jer.* 38. 17.

5. What looks more like a *poſitive Decree for Deſtruction*, than Gods Command to the Prophet, *not to pray* for that People? *Jer.* 17. 16. (as if they had Sinned *that Sin unto Death*, 1 Joh. 5. 16.) and yet we find *Jeremy* very affectionately drawn out from them, *Jer.* 9. 1. &c. and the effect was a farther time for tryal, (*v.* 7.)

6. What *Decree* more Expreſs and Irrevocable than that againſt *Amalek*, (Ex. 17.) *The Lord hath Sworn, that he will utterly blot out all the remembrance of* Amalek *from under Heaven.* 1ſt. *Moſes* is Commanded to *write it in a Book.* 2d. And to *rehearſe it before* Joſhua. 3d. An *Altar* is built to perpetuate the Memory thereof, [called *Jehovah-Niſſi*] and *Balaam* rememembers their Tremendous Doom, (*Numb.* 34. 20. *His end ſhall be to periſh for ever,*) And yet they are a Nation many Hundred Years after this; and though one of the Confederate Enemies of the Church, (for whom the Prophets are ſo much concerned to Lament, and moved thereto by God himſelf, as in the 5th. Conſideration,) yet *David* prays that this Nation alſo, (with other of the Churches Enemies) might come *to ſeek the Name of God*, Pſalm 83. 16.

7. What Doom more poſitive than *Ninive's Deſtruction in Forty Days*? (this was without an *If*) as to the Prophet, or any Man's preſent apprehenſion, when *Jonah* denounced that *Woe*, after he had eſcaped that Storm at Sea,) though he ſoon found it otherwiſe, and was made to underſtand, that God's moſt Severe and Poſitive Threat-

nings, always presuppose a Tacite *Condition* of Final Obduracy and Impenitency, and that they are not otherwise to be understood.

8. What more plain and expres than *Babylon's Destruction*? in *Jer.* 50. and yet God expected Repentance, that he might have healed her, or at least a deliberate Act of Reason, in her hearty desire for her own Salvation, [*We would have healed* Babylon, *but she would not be healed.*] *Jer.* 51. 19.

9. Those *Two famous Texts* following are a *Sacred Coment*, to confirm *the Argument*, and speak the same in Capital Letters, That in *Jer.* 18. 7. *At what time, I say to a Nation or Kingdom to pluck it up, or to destroy it, yet if that Nation turn from their evil, and repent, they shall surely live.* The other in, *Zeph.* 2. 2. *Before the Decree bring forth, seek the Lord.*

10. What can be more positively spoken of the certain and infallible Damnation of any, than Christ himself is pleased to expres against *the Scribes and Pharisees*, who had wilfully and maliciously *Blasphemed that Holy Spirit*, by which they were convinced he did those great *Miracles* among them? In short, *Isaiah* is foreshewn, the *Jews* final rejection of Christ, by reason of that height of Impiety which should amount to no less than *The Sin against the Holy Ghost*, which the Prophet gives us very Emphatically, *Isa.* 6. 10. *Make their Hearts fat, and their Ears heavy, and shut their Eyes, lest they see and hear, and understand, and convert and be healed.* And our Saviour often reminds them of this *Prophecy*, telling them it was *then fulfilled* by their heiht of wilful Impiety, which through Gods Righteous Judgment, rendred his *Gospel*, which he Preached unto them in his own Sacred Person *The Savour of Death unto Death*, although it came amongst them for this Primary *End*, that it might *Enlighten* and *Convert*. Now that these *Jews* had actually sinned *The Sin against the Holy Ghost*, [and so were given up afterwards unto that *Judicial Blindness* and *Obduracy*, as issued in the *Crucifixion* of their *Messias*,] *Christ* expresly tells us in *Mark* 3. 30. touching which, *Matthew* (*Chap.* 13. 32.) says, *It shall never be forgiven* and what can be a more *positive Doom*? And yet the Evangelist *Mark*, [*Chap.* 3. 29.] renders it ἔνοχος ἐστὶ αἰωνίου κρίσεως, which we Translate, *Is in danger of Eternal Damnation*; and this agrees with *Isaiah*, who, expressing the *most dangerous State* which this Nation of the *Jews* could be in on this side *Hell*, [as in the *Text* before,

and

and so remarkable, that each of the Four Evangelists quote it against them, *Matth.* 13. 14. *Mark* 4. 12. *Luke* 8. 10. *John* 12. 40. Besides, St. *Paul* also *Acts* 28. 27.] yet, leaves them not without a *possibility of Salvation*, [*lest they should Convert and be healed*.] And if we compare the former Scriptures with *Rom.* 11. 7, 8. we may find that this *Judicial Blindness* is a *Mark* of their own *Self-reprobation*, and in Contradistinction from *those other Jews*, who were of the *Peculiar Election* of Grace. The Summary gathered from the whole Premises is this, that as on the one hand none can be encouraged to think, that any, living and dying in final Obduracy and final Unbelief, can have any possibility of Salvation, (being a flat contradiction *in Terminis*) so on the other hand there is no Scripture Ground for any Person, City or Nation, though lying under a *Positive* and seeming *Irrevocable Decree* of Wrath, to pass a *Definitive Sentence* against themselves. Which to do, is to enter into Gods *most secret place of Thunder*, into which he would not suffer any of his dearest Favourites, (no not the Holy *Prophets* or *Penmen* of his Word) to enter. And the reason is very plain. For that Discovery, who, (for certain) shall live and dye in Final Unbelief, (or in other words, who they are that will be Self-murderers) which is the true *Cause* and *Ground* of *Gods Unchangable and Irrevocable Decree for their Damnation*,) would forthwith drive them into *Final* and *Irrecoverable Desperation* and *Condemnation*, and which is contrary to Gods Great *End*, in all his *Severest Threatnings*, (even in those Cases which seem most forlorn in Man's Eye,) the whole *Scripture* throughout all its parts, declaring that it is *thereby*, to raise them up to such an awakning sense of the exceeding greatness of their danger, as thereby to provoke them to do their whole endeavour, and to continue therein to cry to God with great Impunity for *Converting Grace*, and to plead his Sacred *Oath*, who hath *Sworn by himself*. (*As I live, saith the Lord, I delight not in the Death of a Sinner, but had rather he should live and not dye, Ezek.* 33. 11.) And this most plainly appears yet farther, when we consider how unkindly God takes it from degenerated *Judah* and *Jerusalem*, that they concluded that their State was, such as was *without hope*, *Jer.* 2. 25. although the *Prophet* had just before told them their Sin was of a most deep dye, insomuch that *much Nitre and Soap would not fetch it out*, for that their *Iniquity was marked before the Lord.* (Jer. 2. 22.) nay and that their *bruise was incurable*, (Ch. 30. 12.) yet for all, there was Hope.

These things rightly apprehended, may not only be sufficient (if God please) to Silence and Shame *those Two* Presumptuous and

most Confident Persons, (who call themselves *The Witnesses*, and who make it one chief *Article of their Faith*, (or *Religion*) to believe *Englands Immediate and Irrecoverable Destruction*,) but likewise to confute that dangerous *Muggletonian Heresie*, and to condemn their horrid Impiety and *Blasphemy*, who pass their wicked Sentence of *Irrevocable Damnation*, on whom they please ; so opposite to the *End* of Gods *Severest Threatnings* against the greatest Enemies of his Church, throughout the Scripture, making the Silly and Ignorant think *They only*, are *Heavens Secretaries of State*, and the *Registers of Gods Unalterable Decrees*. These *Considerations* I hope, (through Gods Blessing) may *Strengthen*, *Comfort* and *Establish* many poor *Self-condemning Christians*, who under *Hellish Suggestions* and *Temptations*, do entertain very unworthy apprehensions of the *Eternal*, *Infinite*, *Goodness*, *Mercy*, *Justice*, *Wisdom*, *Truth* and *Love* ; [for God is Love, 1 *John* 4. 8.] And that we may rightly understand how his *Irrevocable Decree* for the *Damnation* of some, can consist with *Unlimited Goodness* and *Love*, we are to consider that it is Grounded upon his *Eternal Fore-knowledge* of the wilful and *final unbelief* of all those from whom the *most Just and Righteous Judge of all the Earth*, (as *Gen.* 19.) is pleased for most wise reasons, (never to be understood by us in this World) to *deny* and *withhold* Special *Sanctifying Grace*, whose Sovereign Will and Pleasure herein is not the *Real* or *Physical Cause* of their *final Impenitency*, or *Damnation*, but only the *Antecedent* to that *Infallible Consequent*, (as the *withdrawment* of the *Sun* is the *Antecedent* of *Darkness*) *Jer.* 2. 17. *Hast thou not procured this unto thy self*, v. 19. Thy own Iniquity shall Correct thee, *Hos.* 13. 9. *O* Israel *thy Destruction is of thy self, but in me is thy help*. Yet lest we mistake on the other hand, we are to know that Gods most Absolute and Sovereign *Will*, to deny Sanctifying Grace to some, which he gives to others, is the *Causa sine qua non*, (for without this *Will*, they had not perished,) but not the *Physical* or *Natural Cause* of their own *Damnation*, because it doth not *Actually Compel* or *Influence*, (no not that *Debile* part of Man's *Free-will* that yet remains *since* the *Fall*) unto *any Sin* ; And this is that *Will* of God to save some and pass by others, whom he pleaseth, of which the *Apostle* speaks in *Rom.* 9. 19, &c. which no Man ever did or ever can resist.

II. CON-

CONSIDERATION. II.

They to whom God was pleased to reveal most of his Secret Council throughout the Scripture, have been Men of extraordinary Holiness and Exemplary Piety; such who were to do or suffer, beyond all, or most others, for the Testimony of the Word, or for the Name and Glory of God.

THIS is so clear, that it needs no words to confirm that wherein all Men are agreed; And perhaps our *Two Witnesses* might consider that the *Unbelieving Age* we live in, would Question their Eminency for Sanctity, (coming only from their own Testimony of themselves,) and therefore may have endeavoured to persuade the World, that they have set themselves apart for *Martyrs*, speaking positively of their readiness to Sacrifice their Lives in the maintenance of *this Article* of their *Christian Faith*.

CONSIDERATION III.

As to the way and manner of Gods Discovery of Judgments, or Mercies, we find it various in Scripture, (viz. by Apparitions, Voices, Angels, Dreams, Visions, &c.) But it is the Unanimous Opinion of Divines, and other Solid and Understanding Christians, that every of those ways are long since Ceased.

1. WHatever the Holy *Prophets* and *Penmen of the Word* speak in a way of *Prediction*, as it had immediate relation unto Judgments; yet what they foretold, was always most Congruous unto the *Tenour of Gods Covenant*; And here we might enlarge. But to be brief, we find throughout Sacred Writ, that the *Conditions* of the *Covenant* are these. 1st. *Severe Chastisement* in case of a long contin-

nce and growth in Sin, and Obſtinate Rebellion. 2d. Gods *greater readineſs to return to be Gracious*, (even in the greateſt height and aggravations of their Sins, and under the, ſeeming, moſt Forlorn Circumſtances) than we can be to *Repent* and *turn* to him; that ſo we all may be aſſur'd *no State on this ſide Hell, with reſpect unto Gods ſevere Indignation threatned, is remedileſs, and wholly deſperate.* Now if our *Two new Prophets* are to *be tryed* by this *Touchſtone*, we may eaſily perceive what Spirit moves them unto ſuch *Preſumption*, as to aſſure the World that *our Nation* (though God knows, a moſt wicked and Rebellious People) are *paſt all Recovery*; or that it is *Impoſſible* God can, or will give *Repentance* to us, [for ſo we are to conclude *Judgment is Immediately and Irreſiſtibly to overtake us*:] By what Spirit theſe Men are Acted, let all Judge.

2. The great *End* why God diſcovered himſelf by theſe Ways in his *Sacred Predictions*, is now *Ceaſed*, and therefore all ſuch ways of diſcovery ſince that time are *Ceaſed*, with reſpect to any matter of *Publick Prophecy*, relating to a City or Kingdom. Now the great *End* of Sacred *Viſions* in the days of Old were, 1ſt. To beget a Holy Awe and Reverence in the Church towards thoſe Perſons, whom God Selected out from many, in and by whom to make an immediate diſcovery of his Mind and Will, not thereby to *lift them up*, (who were more *humble*, and more *afflicted* and *leſs in their own and others Eyes* than moſt good Men beſide.) 2. That the *Sacred Oracles of his Word* might be *Sealed* up thereby, both to that preſent Age, and to all future, even to the *End* of the World. But we are not to expect ſince the *Evangeliſts* and *Apoſtles*, any other Writings of the *Immediate Inditement of the Holy Ghoſt*, as all theirs were; And therefore to entertain any Men as *Prophets, raiſed up by his Immediate Inſpiration, to publiſh any Predictions unto a City or Nation, of an Infallible Certainty as the written VWord*, (and how much more then when the *Matter* they foretel is *contrary to the Tenour of all Scripture Threatnings*, which never excludes a *Poſſibility of avoiding the Judgment by Repentance*) is to offer high Indignity to *God* himſelf, and to his *written Word*, and to all the *Holy Prophets* and *Penmen* thereof.

3. This *written VWord*, St. *Peter* makes to be a *more ſure* and *ſafe Rule* for the *Church* to walk by, than that *Voice of the Father* which was heard by *him* and *Two more* of *Chriſts Diſciples* and Favourites, (*James* and *John*) *at our Saviours Tranſfiguration on the Mount*, although it came *from the moſt excellent Glory*, and confirmed the *Truth* which was *Teſti-*

Testified throughout the whole Scripture, and is one of the most importa
Articles of our *Faith*, (*viz.* that *Christ* was the *Father's beloved Son*, a
sent among us, that we should *Hear him* preaching to us, 2 *Pet.* 1.
18, 19. [*But we have a more sure Word of Prophecy*, &c.] A famo
Text to assure us how eminently God hath *honoured his written wor*
Which confutes the pretended Authority of *Rome's Tradition*, and al
of any who would impose their *Impulses* and *Impressions* on the Worl
as if they were to be reverenced like the holy *Scripture*.

4. All that before hath been said, doth not gainsay but that *God* ma
discover several great things unto whom he pleaseth, and both ho
and when he sees best (and that also since the *Scripture* hath been th
sealed up) but then we must take these *Considerations* along with u
1. They are unto Men of *Piety*, and such whom he intends to mak
some way or other eminently instrumental for his Glory, &c. 2. An
of *Modesty* and *Humility*, who are not ambitious to expose themselv
as *Prophets immediately sent by God*. 3. And least of all do they spea
any thing for *Publick Instruction*, which doth *contradict* the whole T
nor of the Scripture (of which before.) But *These* who call themselv
the *Two Witnesses*, have not approved themselves to be immediate
raised up by God, in any of the several respects aforesaid, nor yet
those which follow.

CONSIDERATION IV.

*The Ratification of Sacred Predictions is of such a na
ture as carries its own self-Evidence, that they ca
be no other than from God, contrary to all pre
tended Revelations.*

THE Confirmation of Sacred Predictions are to be con
sidered,

1. *Affirmatively*. And this,

Either as they have more immediate Relation to *Private Persons* o
Families, or to *Publick Communities* (as Cities and Nations.) As it con
cern

erns the *first*, ſo the Confirmation is of a more Private Conſidera-ion, as by particular Signs and Tokens; This alſo holds good in Pro-hecies of a more *publick* Nature, and are commonly granted for heir ſake whom the Prediction concerns (as a Revelation of the par-icular *Time*, *Place*, *Manner*, *Circumſtances*, with the *Antecedents*, *Con-omitants* and *Conſequences*:) And this carries with it a Twofold Convi-tion, Natural and Moral; *Natural*, ſo far as theſe Circumſtantials may, and have been ſufficient to perſwade *Heathens* and *Infidels* of the Tranſcendent Being, of a *Supreme*, *Omniſcient*, *Omnipotent God*, the *all-piſe Fore-ordainer*, *Diſpoſer* and *Predeterminer of all Events*. Alſo of his *Goodneſs*, *Wiſdom* and *Love* to his Creatures in his *Government* of them, ccording to ſuch *Laws* as eſtabliſh his Praiſe and Glory, and his Crea-ures Felicity. A *Moral Conviction* alſo, ſo far as theſe Circumſtan-ials have a great prevalency with thoſe who profeſs their Subjection o his written *Laws*, to *reſtrain* them from further Sin (the End of ll) and to *conſtrain* them unto new Obedience, in order to avoid the Threatning, and obtain the promiſed Rewards. Or as they more mmediately concern the *Publick* (as *Cities*, or *Kingdoms*, or *Peo-le*) ſo the Sacred Predictions are confirmed Two Ways. Either 1. By enewed *Appearances*, or 2. By *Signs* and *Miracles*. The firſt runs uch throughout the Scripture, and the reaſon is from God's nfinite Goodneſs, endeavouring to fix man's ſerious Attention, and o remove all grounds of diffidence: Alſo from infinite Mercy, Pati-nce and Long-ſuffering, who is never willing to ſtrike before he warns gain and again, to provoke to Repentance: And further alſo, for the reater Aggravation of the Sins of the wilfully obſtinate; and hence o many *Prophets* were ſent to the *Jews*, (*riſing early* and *ſitting up late*) nd ſo many *Signs* and *Prodigies* before their total Deſtruction. Or . By *Miracles*, of which the Scripture is ſo full.

Now if we examin our *Two Prophets*, and try them by theſe things, what particulars can we find them comporting with any of theſe ings, which have Ratifyed the Sacred Predictions (and eſpeci-y Threatnings of Deſolation to a City or a whole Land) for Their ry *End* ſeems contrary to God, in the Judgments he threatens; o (to ſpeak as a Man) is anxiouſly ſolicitous leſt the wicked miſun-rſtand his Intention, and run away from him into *final Deſparation*, at large before.) But theſe *Witneſſes*, on the contrary, labour to ſſeſs the World (who are otherwiſe apt to entertain too hard thoughts God) that all his holy Attributes [yea his Love and Mercy) can-t have a more magnificent Exaltation and Triumph than in the *mediate and Irreſiſtible Deſtruction of this Nation*, or rather its *Total Deſolation*

Deſolation [as their odd Phraſe of *Beginning and making an End at once*, ſeems to import.]

As for Mr. *Ward*, he gives us no one collateral *Sign* or *Token* to convince any that he is ſent of God, and raiſed up to be a Prophet, but toils hard to ſhew us after what manner he came to be Infallibly perſwaded into the good Opinion he hath of his Impulſe, hoping that then we need no other Confirmation of the Doctrine (or Article of his Faith) but only his *ipſe dixit*, whereas neither of them ſhew us any *Antecedents*, *Concomitants* or *Circumſtantials* of *Time*, *Place*, or *Manner* when, where, or how they had this Revelation, *&c.*

But its worth our Conſideration that *Evans* (the other Witneſs) will hardly own ſuch an impulſe as *VVard* avoucheth for him, honeſtly confeſſing he hath little or nothing more to ſay for the matter, than that he hath a firm Belief that *VVard*, (becauſe he ſaid ſo) had obtained this Article of his Faith by Divine Inſpiration. If we follow him hence, we need not much queſtion but he hath been taught to *Believe as the Church believes*; and who can tell but *Evans* may in a little time *ſlip his Neck out of the Collar*, and leave Mr. *VVard* to *witneſs alone*; and then, *Woe be to the Man that is alone!* And touching *Signs* or *Miracles*, neither of them pretended thereunto.

2. *Negatively.*

God never, that yet I have obſerved, confirmed one Threatning touching the Ruin of any; Either,

1. By ſuch an *Abſolute Oath as hath not in his own Breaſt the Condition of Reverſing it upon the Sinners Repentance*; nor doth his Oath hinder it, but ſerves rather to awake the guilty to a more ſerious Conſideration of the great Danger they are in, and thereby to quicken up a ſpeedy Converſion. One *Standard Royal*, or *Sacred Teſt* we have in Scripture whereby to underſtand Gods moſt poſitive Threatnings, and all ſuch Comminations as ſeem to carry in them a moſt Abſolute and Irrevocable Decree, and that is in *Numb.* 14. 21, 23. *As truly as I live, ſurely they ſhall not ſee the Land which I ſware to their Fathers, neither ſhall any of them that provoked me ſee it.* Which the *Original* both in the Old and New Teſtament renders *Conditionally* (*if* they *ſee* the Land) as we find in the *Margin* alſo obſerved, both in the fore-mentioned Text, and alſo in *Pſal.* 95. 11. [*Unto whom I ſware in my wrath, that they ſhould not enter into my reſt*] Agreeable to *Heb.* 3. 11. [ὡς ὤμοσα ἐν τῇ ὀργῇ μου, Εἰ, εἰσελεύσονται εἰς τὴν κατάπαυσίν μου] As much as to ſay,

If they repent they may enter; for my *Threatning* (though *confirmed with an Oath*) doth not *simply* (in a *Physical* Sense) *hinder them from repenting*, and so from entring into the promised Land. The *Jews* account this *Oath* the most dreadful Ratification of their Doom in the whole Scripture, being denounced on that Day (as their Tradition is) for their *Great Anniversary Fast*, on the 10th of the 7th *Month*, or solemn *Day of Attonement*, *Numb.* 16. the only Fast in all their Year, and wherein the whole Congregation are strictly commanded to afflict their Souls, under the Penalty of being *cut off*, v. 29, 31. Here, by the way, observe, that most serious *Fasting and Prayer*, and Heart-Affliction and Contrition is God's Ordinance, by which to turn away even the severest Threatnings of his Wrath, most suitable to that *Oath* of God's in *Ezek.* 33. 11. *As I live, saith the Lord, I delight not in the Death of any Sinner, but that they turn and live*; *Turn ye, turn ye, for why will ye die, O House of* Israel?

2. Or, by that *Seal or Witness of the Holy Ghost in Believers*, which testifies to all, more or less, that they are *Justified by Faith*, *Adopted* and *Sanctified* [called the πληροφορια, or full perswasion of Faith.

But Mr. *Ward*, (like a good Christian, shall we say?) hath *Prostituted* his *Faith* and *Hope* in God, and all the *Assurance* of the *Spirit's witness* in him, and laid *all at stake* to maintain his strong *Impression* or *Impulse*, and tempts uncharitable Persons to think he hath no other *Article* of his *Religion*, or at least none that is more *Sacred* or *Venerable* in his Eye.

CON-

CONSIDERATION V.

The consequent Effects which the immediate Manifestation of God unto the Holy Prophets, (or Penmen of Scripture, or eminent Worthies of the Church) had upon themselves, were far differing from the effects which seem to appear in our two late pretended Prophets.

MOre *Generally* we find in the Holy Men of Old,
1st. *Humble and low thoughts of themselves*, thus it was with *Abraham* that great *Prophet*, Gen 17. 3, 17, 18. *Ch.* 18. 3, 27. thus with *Jacob*, *Chap.* 28. 27. *Chap.* 33. 10. *Moses*, Exod. 3. 15. *Gideon*, Judg. 6. 15. *Isaiah Ch.* 6. 5.

2. *Sweet, Courteous, Affable demeanour and Condescention* to others: The Scriptures are full of this, particularly one Text for all, 2 *Tim.* 2. 24, 25. *The* Servant *of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all Men, apt to teach, patient* (or forbearing) *In Meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them Repentance to the acknowledging of the Truth*, (so opposite to *Persecution*, or the *Muggletonian* way of Damning, *&c.* compared with *Tit.* 3. 2. *Speak evil of no Man; be not brawlers, but gentle, shewing all meekness unto all Men.* And how unsuitable to this *Doctrin*, is the Spirit of these Two Men, so presumptuously asserting that *Satan had Transform'd himself into an Angel of Light* in Mr. *Baxter*, who then detected by what Spirit these pretended *Prophets* were moved; This *Meekness* which we are in the consideration of, (so opposite to proud, railing, brawling, and unchristian demeanour) is one of the excellent *Fruits of the Spirit*, (Gal. 5. 23.) a Temper so amiable, that the *British Saxons* resolved this should be their *Touchstone* to try that *Doctrin* which *Austin* the *Monk* came over with, from Pope *Gregory*, (called the Great) even then, when they could not Argue the Point with him.

More *Particularly*,

The most severe and positive Threatnings to the greatest Sinners have always tended to stir up the Holy *Prophets* and *Worthies* of Old unto an extraordinary *Wrestling*, *Mourning* and *Prayer* for them: And this,

1. Whether we consider them as denounced against Gods *backsliden Church*, we see it most conspicuous, *viz.* in *Moses*, when they had made and Worshipped their Golden Calf, *Exod.* 32. 10. *Let me alone, that my wrath may wax hot against them, and Censure them,* (and *Deut.* 9. 14. adds, that *I may blot out their Name from under Heaven*;) and yet at that time when Immediate and Irrevocable Destruction seemed to attend that whole Nation, how Sweetly and Excellently doth *Moses* Intercede for them? And Gods Wrath was pacified. So at other times also, (*Deut.* 9. from *verse* 22. to the end, compared with *Numb.* 11. 10, 11.) Another Instance we have in *Phineas*, *Numb.* 25. 11. and in *Samuel*, 1 *Sam.* 12. 23. and in *Jeremy chap* 4. 19. *chap.* 9. 1, 10. *Chap.* 13 17. and in *Isaiah*, *chap.* 22. 4. and in *Ezek. chap.* 21. 6. and in *Micah*, *chap.* 1. 8. And God himself puts his *backsliden* Children (even them when lying under his severest and most positive Threatnings) into the right way of preventing the desolation threatned, *Jer.* 4. 8 *chap.* 6. 26. *chap.* 7. 29.

2. Or whether considered as against the *Grand Enemies of his Church*; and here, *N. B.*

First, God puts *them* also into *the right way of preventing their ruine Threatned*, Isa. 13. 6. *We would have healed* Babylon, (what? *Babylon*, that cursed Nation, Sentenced to utter desolation! Yes this *Babylon*,) *but she would not.* Compare with *Jer.* 51. 9. Thus God stirs up *Ninive* to Repentance, Exhorting them to *turn from their Violence*, &c. *Jonah* 3. 2, 8. and *Pharaoh* also, even *after* that God had expresly told him he had *raised him up to shew his wondrous Power*, (or Justice) *on him and his Kingdom*, Exod. 9. 16. Compared with *chap.* 10. 3. A Text greatly to be Noted.

Secondly, God himself expresseth very enlarged Bowels towards these his Enemies, even then, when lying under his *Severest Comminations.* One great Instance take for all; *Moab* is threatned by Gods Oath to be made a *Perpetual Desolation*, (*Zeph.* 2. 9. yet his wonderful Bowels of Compassion yerned towards that great Enemy of his Church, *Isaiah* 15. 5. *ch.* 16. 9. *Jer.* 48. 31, 32, 36. Texts worthy to be Engraven in Letters of Gold and fixed in us.

Thirdly, God draws out the *Prophets* Heart to Mourn over *them* at the same time, when lying under his *Severest Doom*, that they may be taught how to mourn for their own Sins and *Repent*, and *escape* the Desolation threatned; thus for *Tyre*, *Ezek.* 27. 1, 31. for *Egypt. Ezek.* 32. 2, 18. and thus for *Moab*, *Jer.* 48. 20. (to Instance no more.)

Now

NOW from the whole, it is not difficult for any considering Person to *Conjecture* by what Spirit *Ward* and *Evans* do Act in these respects, for they are far from stirring up themselves or others to Pray and Fast, and Wrestle for our poor sinful *Land*, (which they have thus unmercifully Sentenced to unavoidable Destruction,) that they seem resolved to *Pawn all the hopes and expectations they have of Salvation*, (or all the Religion they have) as a certain *Pledg*, that *God will not give Repentance to* England, though they should seek it never so fervently; nay more, that his most Sacred *Oath* is gone forth, (without an *If*) that they may thereby *Infallibly* be assured God hath made an *Irrevocable Decree* for our *Immediate Destruction*. Now let any judge, Doth not these Mens *Faith* teach us all to cast our selves into a *Hellish Plunge of Desperation*, and thereby to become Seven-fold more the *Children of the Devil* than now *we are?* Doth not it teach flat *Rebellion* against God, and the whole *Tenor of his Word*, who *Commands* us all to *Trust in him at all Times*, and to *Pour out our Souls before him* in the worst condition we can be in? *Psal.* 68. 8. And *always to Pray and not faint*, Luke 18. 1. compar'd with *Job* 35. 14. *Judgment is before him, therefore trust thou in him*, which Text is excellently explained *Jer.* 9. 24.

That *Scripture* in *Ezek.* 14. 14. may be Objected —*Though* Noah, Daniel *or* Job *were in it, yet they should deliver but their own Souls.* *Answ.* 1. We all know, God sometimes makes a plain discovery of *a limited Period* for his Mercy to a *City* or *People* with this *Prov so*, That if they *Repent* not *in that time* they shall be *Destroyed*. But where do any prove that *this present Year is* Englands *last Period* for continued Mercy? *Conjectures* are many, (perhaps) but we must not Build our *Faith* on *Impressions* or *Impulses*, and Idolize our own Apprehensions. *Answ.* 2. If we *attentively consider* the aforementioned *Text*, we may find how much we all lie under a *Vulgar mistake*, for that *Scripture* often repeats it, that we might take a particular notice thereof, and not run into a dangerous *Error*. God there tells us plainly, (and no more that yet I learn) *viz. That when he is so highly provoked with a Nation, as to* Begin *to bring his Desolating Judgments thereon*, (or in the Scripture words, when his *Decree hath begun to bring forth*) it may *sometimes so happen*, [though it seems not to be a constant General and Infallible Rule, as in the Case of *Phineas* Intercession, when the *Plague* was begun, and other Instances] *That he will not hear the Prayers of his greatest Favourites, but will proceed to destroy*; And if notwithstanding that harder *Text* be Objected in *Jer.* 15. 1. It is as easily

Answer'd

Answer'd. For *Jerusalems* Destruction was thereby foretold in all the appearance of *Irrevocable Judgment*, and yet (as was before observ'd in the 4th. Note under the 1st. Consideration) notwithstanding all, if *Zedekiah* had gone forth to meet the *King of* Babylon's *Princes*, the City had certainly not been destroyed by the *Babylonians*.

Answ. 3. Our plain *Rule* is this, That *we ought to conclude their condition, or the State of any Nation or People so desperate, as to be exempted from all hope of Mercy, or Salvation, no though God possibly Denounceth Destruction, and prefixeth a very speedy Time, or Day, without any Condition limited*: As that Famous Instance in *Ninive* may serve once for all. There God had Twice declared it positively, that *within Forty Days* that City should be Destroyed, first to *Jonah* before his Storm, (*Jonah* 1. 2. compared with *ch.* 3. 2.) and afterwards:

It may be *Asked*, whether, if *Immediate Destruction* should come upon *England*, will not this plainly Evidence these Two Men were *Divinely Inspired*, and sent by God? *Answ.* This will no more prove they have *the Spirit of Prophesy*, and are immediately sent by *God*, than it proves that any *Minister* hath that Divine *Gift* in an Extraordinary manner, because he publisheth he *Verily Believes*, (or is fully persuaded *some sudden Judgment is coming upon us*,) and yet I make not this an *Article* of my Faith, and least of all, to believe we are in a Remedilesse Condition, (*For with God all things shall be possible unto them that believe.*) And how many *Philonides* are their amongst us, who need no *Extraordinary Inspiration*, to make them believe the same?

But to draw the Eyes of all Men upon *them*, as Extraordinary Prophets of God, raised up to denounce against *England*, a desolating Judgment *Immediately* and *Irrevocably* falling on us, is such a *Secret*, as if God intends to accomplish the same, yet perhaps he hath not revealed it to any *Angel* or *Creature*: And it is very evident, that several great Evils are like to follow, if *these Mens Impulses* are taken for *Oracular Truths*. As 1st. their own *Self-exaltation*, *Pride*, *Self-conceit*, as if the World must needs fix their Eyes in a singular manner upon these *Two Persons* as the *Two witnesses in the Revelation*. They are not *Jealous* of themselves (it seems,) how far *Satan* may become *transform'd* into the *white Devil*, and hold a Dominion in their Spirits. 2. It occasions *Profane Men to deride Piety*, *and to contemn the Christian Religion*, and the *Seals of the Covenant*, and to *nullifie* and *Ridicule* that precious *Faith* of true *Believers*, by which they are *Justified*, *Adopted*, and *Sanctified*, and to think *contemptibly* of the

the *Seal* or *Witneſs of the Spirit*, by whoſe Infallible Light, Believers are (more or leſs) *Divinely aſſured, that they are the Children of God.* A more ſure and ſafe *Teſtimony*, than all *Viſions* and *Revelations*, than all *Voices* and Secret *Impulſes* and *Impreſſions*. 3d. It ſerves excellently for blowing up that *Animoſity*, that ſtill remains in a ſort of *Men* amongſt us, who ſo much deſire, yea thirſt after, and wait for *Englands Calamity*, and Imbrument in *War*, *Blood* and *Confuſion*, and who will not want *Rabſhecka*'s fine-ſpun Argument to perpetrate their Miſchief, as if they were ſent out againſt our Land, to *Execute* by *Immediate Commiſſion from* GOD *himſelf*, *his Irrevocable Decree*, (2 *Kings* 18. 25.)

Thus I have endeavoured to Anſwer yours, according to my Capacity, and that ſtrait of Time I was then in, when your Commands came to my knowledge. The Lord gives us all a right underſtrnding of his Word, that we may not be toſſed *to and fro by every Wind of Doctrin*, but Eſtabliſhed in Grace and Holineſs, and Comfort, and Aſſurance, with full perſeverance unto the End, and that we may by this *Divine Touchſtone* now preſented before us, *Try the Spirits* of theſe and all ſuch like *Pretended Prophets, and Impoſtors, which are gone forth into the World*, to deceive, (if poſſible) the *Elect* themſelves, who ſhall all be *kept* by the mighty *Power* of God through *Faith* unto Salvation.

If real benefit may hereby redound to any ſingle Perſon, (and more eſpecially to *Troubled Souls* lying under a deep ſenſe of their own *Irrevocable* Doom, *&c.*) I ſhall heartily bleſs God, who hath granted me my chiefeſt *End* in Publiſhing theſe few Leaves, and ſhall have cauſe to rejoyce, that no diſcouragements, (either from within my ſelf, or from others *&c.*) have any longer detained this *Epiſtle* from your (genuine) Cenſure, thongh its *prolixity* may be ſufficient Ground to ask your Pardon for ſo large a Trouble: But your Goodneſs is ſuch, as makes me depend upon the grant of this Requeſt, who am,

Sir,

Your Humble Servant

to Command,

ERRATA.

PAge 5. line 15. dele *wherein.* p. 10. l. 24. for *Prophet* r. *Proof.* p. 11. l. 15. dele *that.*